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ABSTRACT

This bulletin traces the history of Oregon's Child Development Specialist (CDS) program, desribes development of the program model, discusses the qualifications and role of the specialist, presents a brief overview of the implementation of the CDS program in Salem (Oregon), provides evidence of the state program's success, and suggests methods for initiating CDS programs at the district level. As mandated by state law, the program is intended to encourage local districts to make the services of child development specialists available to pupils in primary grades. The specialists are to help the students develop positive attitudes toward themselves and others and to guide the school staff in identifying learning or developmental problems. In addition, they help parents understand and deal with their children's aptitudes and needs and assist all concerned in finding outside sources of help if required. (Author/PGD)

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OSSC BULLETIN

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The Child Development Specialist Program

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Jim Hockstaff

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Preface

The Child Development Specialist program is the product of over ten years of determined effort by educators, legislators, and professionals from a variety of backgrounds to address the social and affective needs of Oregon's elementary school children. It is a unique approach in that it is preventive as well as remedial, involves parents, teachers, and community resources as a team, and seeks to benefit all children, not just those with identified needs.

From an initial pilot phase involving six school sites, the CDS program has grown to include sixty-five elementary schools throughout the state. The overwhelming support of the program by parents, educators, and professionals, as well as increasing demand from educators all over the country for information and materials from the State Department of Education provide ample evidence that the CDS program is having a beneficial impact on the lives of the children it serves.

This Bulletin traces the history and rationale of the program, describes its components, suggests procedures for implementing a CDS program, and features the efforts of the Salem Elementary School District to fully integrate affective and social education into its elementary curriculum.

The author, Jim Hockstaff, is employed by OSSC as a graduate research assistant.

Philip K. Piele
Executive Secretary

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Legislative History

The Child Development Specialist program was created by the Oregon State Legislature (HB 2455) in 1973, but legislative attempts to address the emotional and social needs of Oregon's school children can be traced back to a decade before the program became a reality.

Senator C.E. Hoyt of Corvallis, chief sponsor of the 1973 bill, was also among the sponsors of HB 1733 in the 1963 Legislature Assembly. This earlier bill (later tabled by the Ways and Means Committee) sought to provide counselors to

> assist in the early identification of children with special learning and behavior problems, evaluating such children to determine the nature of their problems and developing a plan to solve these problems including but not limited to consultation with teachers and their parents and referrals to and liaison with special community services and facilities.

Two similarly unsuccessful attempts followed in 1967 and 1969. These bills proposed a school social worker program that would assign social workers to each school to

> help cope with the problems of socially or emotionally maladjusted children, including but not limited to assisting in the early identification of children with such problems, helping to develop and carry out a plan to solve these problems through consultation with teachers and other school personnel, casework with selected children and their parents and referrals to and liaison with available community services and facilities.

Three years later, in fall 1972, Senator Hoyt, along with Representative Sam Johnson of Redmond, both supporters of the earlier school social worker bill, conducted hearings in Bend to gather information toward the development of still another program. This one, to be known as the Child Development Specialist (CDS) program, would not only help troubled children,

but also address the social and emotional needs of all school children as well.

In the course of the hearings, the Bend Elementary School Counseling Project, funded by the Law Enforcement Administrative Authority, emerged as a viable approach to the reduction of juvenile delinquency. The rationale of the Bend project was tied to the discovery that early preventative efforts to help primary children and their parents lead to more positive social attitudes in children and the reduced likelihood of delinquent behavior in adolescent and adult life.

Briefly described, the Bend program employed a director and four counselors serving eighty teachers in eight schools with an approximate population of 2,500 students. During the 1972-1973 school year, 114 elementary students were targeted on the basis of inschool antisocial behaviors. Project activities included assisting teachers to identify and treat potentially delinquent children, parent consultation, individual and group counseling with students, providing liaison with schools and other community agencies, and testing students in terms of their inschool antisocial behaviors. It was generally conceded that such a program could have beneficial impact not only in the reduction of delinquency, but in a broader sense as a means of encouraging healthy emotional development in all children.

In an effort to establish such a program on a statewide basis, Senator Hoyt, Representative Johnson, John Harbison (a Bend elementary principal), Doss Knighten (director of the Bend Elementary Counseling Program), and Claude Morgan and Les Adkins from the Oregon Department of Education composed and later introduced HB 2455 into the 1973 Legislature. The new

law (ORS 343.125) prescribed that:

(1) ...the district school board of every school district operating any elementary schools may make the services of a child development specialist available to the pupils enrolled in the elementary schools.

(2) A child development specialist shall provide primary prevention services throughout a child's environment directly or in cooperation with others:
   (a) Pupils enrolled in the elementary school, with priority given at the primary level (including kindergarten) to help them develop positive attitudes toward themselves and others in relation to life career goals.
   (b) The professional staff of the elementary school to assist them in early identification of pupils with learning or developmental problems.
   (c) Parents of pupils enrolled in elementary schools to help them understand their children's unique aptitudes and needs, and to aid in relating home, school, and neighborhood experiences. Additionally, the specialist shall refer pupils enrolled in the elementary school to appropriate state or local agencies for additional assistance, and to coordinate resources available through the community and the school.

(3) School districts may provide the services authorized under this section by contract with qualified state or local programs.

The Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR 23-050) provided the guidelines for the program's implementation. The statute made provisions for the Department of Education to:

Monitor district compliance with the requirements of ORS 343.125-343.145 and OAR 23-050;

Establish measurement criteria for the competencies required of the CDS in OAR 23-050;

Assist in the evaluation and authorization of each CDS person as required in ORS 343.125-145.

As with earlier legislative efforts, the CDS program focused attention on primary grade children. However, one important distinction between the CDS program and its predecessors is that all children are to be served, not just those with identified needs. Also, the orientation of previous bills was remedial or crisis centered, whereas the CDS program was intended to be preventative, as well as remedial.

One can speculate as to why HB 2455 was successfully passed after its predecessors failed. One important factor was the broad base of support enjoyed by the CDS concept. Claude Morgan, elementary guidance specialist for the Oregon Department of Education, recalls, "Once the bill was drafted... we did a lot of homework. We met social worker groups, the head of the State Health Department, counselor organizations, psychologists, and others, showing them what this program was intended to be, and by the time the session rolled around we had the support of those groups because they were not excluded."

Development of the CDS Model

Although the basic concepts and rationale underlying the Child Development Specialist program received approval by human development professionals from a wide variety of service organizations, no one was sure what a successful CDS project would look like, what strategies would be employed, how projects might differ from one another, and what individuals would prove most successful in implementing the program. For this reason the implementation of House Bill 2455 was viewed as a model building process that would provide data for the design and testing of specific strategies that (1) were consistent with the overall concept, goals, and framework of the program; (2) had a high probability of being replicable in other settings; and (3) provided alternative strategies or options to local districts in designing a CDS program that met their unique needs, priorities, and setting.

In November 1973, requests for proposals were distributed to public shools throughout the state to encourage the development of community-based, transportable models for a CDS program designed to recognize, define, and promote students' individual strengths. The proposed programs were to focus on prevention, early assessment, and alleviation of developmental and learning problems of primary grade pupils. Funds were available to implement several pilot projects for a twenty-four month period. Funding was limited to the costs of a K-4 program, including staff, supplies, materials evaluation, transportation, and training. The purchase of rental equipment, hardware, or facilities, as well as indirect costs, were not allowable expenses. A biennium budget of $55,000 was set as the upper limit for a pilot project.

Local school districts could submit proposals individually or in conjunction with a local community agency. However, the proposed project had to conform to the following provisions:

1. Operate in the primary grades (k-4)
2. Document community/school support of the effort.
3. Establish a local advisory committee as a mechanism for gaining parent, community, and professional guidance
4. Establish goals based upon local identified needs
5. Delineate measurable objectives to meet these goals
6. Accommodate a third-party evaluation
7. Involve outside resource persons
8. Define an operable role and function for the CDS
9. Submit a resume of the CDS upon award to be approved and authorized by the State Department of Education
10. Identify staff involved and the local organization
11. Submit the endorsements and expected involvement of local agencies
12. Provide periodic written progress and expenditure reports to the State Department of Education in conjunction with the third party evaluation reports

Award of the Grants

Awards were made by the state superintendent of public instruction to six school districts for the pilot projects and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory for the evaluation of the pilot program. By March 1975 the pilot effort to explore, design, and test alternative strategies for providing CDS services within the elementary school setting was well under way. The projects were established in Hermiston, Bend, Portland, North Bend, Roseburg, and Salem.

The projects were similar in many ways. Underlying all of them, of course, were the basic premises of the CDS project. All six pilot projects targeted school children in grades 1 to 3. In addition, North Bend and

Portland included kindergarten levels, and Portland targeted fourth graders as well. The amount of the initial grants ranged from approximately $30,000 to $40,000. The staffing for all the programs included a full-time CDS. Each of the projects employed a half-time to full-time secretary or assistant; Hermiston and North Bend also employed part-time nurses. Each project specified student objectives including positive attitude toward self and others and improved interpersonal communication; a few projects specified perceptual motor skills and physical development concerns. Each district included in its student objectives provisions for individual cases requiring special consideration.

Model Characteristics

The CDS pilot projects can be best described by considering five components of the model.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral component of the CDS model. Assessment procedures used in the pilot projects included behavioral checklists, the Developing Understanding of Self and Others program (DUSO), the Bessell Human Development Teacher Rating Scale, the Whitman Teacher Judgment Scale, and the Hill Walker Checklist. The Roseburg project employed a locally developed pupil rating scale that assessed student behavior in the following areas: task completion, on-task, understanding situational behavior, reactions to authority, approach to new experiences, reaction to stress, truthfulness, day-dreaming, friendship, sharing, use of others' property, self-assurance, perceptionistic-neglect, and aggressive-passive.

These ratings were conducted in the fall, winter, and spring for each child. The Salem project administered a locally developed motor-skills assessment.

Intervention

The intervention procedures employed by the fledgling projects ranged from the DUSO program, Bessell Human Development Program (especially Magic Circle activities), and TA for Tots. All made provisions for individualized prescriptions for children requiring special assistance.

Teacher Involvement

Teachers have the primary responsibility of carrying out affective activities in the classroom. In most cases teachers were provided inservice training and consultation in the selection and use of the affective curriculum resources, and all worked under the guidance of the CDS staff.

Parent Involvement

Parent participation is a fundamental component of the CDS model. Parent training activities were held on the basis of parent input. A number of training sessions focusing on parenting skills were provided, as well as informal discussions with individual parents and home visits. Newsletters were sent to keep parents informed of the projects' activities.

Community Involvement

In each of the pilot projects, CDS staff maintained contact with a variety of community and service agencies in the areas of mental and physical health. In some cases, advisory committees consisting of representatives from local service agencies were organized. Presentations were

provided to local interest groups and agencies, and local media were used for public relations activities.

In June 1977, formal model development was completed. By this time the state CDS program had achieved a high level of acceptance and approval. A number of delivery strategies and techniques had been implemented and evaluated. The profile of an effective CDS model was beginning to take shape. Typically, the specialist was assigned to the school site, though he or she might serve two different schools. The range of staff configurations and target populations varied somewhat among the individual local projects. In one extreme case, a single CDS worker was responsible for nearly 600 elementary school children in thirty classrooms spread among eight school sites. At one time Portland targeted nine elementary schools with seven child development specialists and twenty-five CDS assistants.

Target populations varied as well. Most districts originally concentrated on primary grade children, while many of the districts now provide services up to the sixth grade level. Underlying all the individual projects, however, is the premise that schools must in some fashion serve the emotional needs of children by involving everyone of significance in the child's educational and social growth. The CDS program is intended to enhance students' academic performance through an emphasis on and development of positive self-concept, problem-solving ability, and social responsibility.

Qualifications and Role of the Specialist

Before a school district may legally implement a CDS program, it must be approved by the State Department of Education and must employ a state-certified specialist. The CDS program's approach to training and certification is based upon competencies.

Specialist Competencies

A competency-based approach to CDS selection, training, and certification was considered to be the most appropriate because the program was instituted before training programs for child development specialists were developed. Thus, individuals from a variety of backgrounds, including social work, early childhood, elementary counseling, and educational psychology, were placed in the role of CDS. Also, many of the skills observed in the specialist appeared to relate more to experience than to formal training. Experiential skills do not appear to be amenable to the traditional certification standards to courses and credit hours.

Provisions for the specific CDS competencies suggested by OAR 23-050 are as follows:

> Individuals contracted as Child Development Specialists shall hold a Personnel Services Certificate, a Personnel Services Certificate of Accomplishment as issued by Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, or be approved to serve in that capacity by the State Board of Education. Any approval issued by the State Board shall include a review by TSPC based on the applicant's qualifications and ability to perform the required functions as identified in OAR 23-050 and the employing district's position description. When selecting the Child Development Specialist, training and experience in the following competencies shall be considered:

a. Observing and analyzing behaviors in social systems using such concepts as attitude change, interpersonal relations, social stratification, group dynamics leadership, stereotypes, and physical development of the individual child.

b. Establishing relationships which help children and adults deal with school-related problems.

c. Explaining the functions of the following types of measurements: Achievement tests, intelligence tests, behavioral observations, sociometric tests, rating scales.

d. Communicating the results of assessment, in cooperation with specialists, to children, parents, and teachers.

e. Working effectively in schools, agencies, and the community.

f. Identifying resources and making appropriate referrals.

g. Planning, coordinating, and consulting with others to provide in-service training programs in such areas as human relations, student records, test interpretation, parent conferences.

h. Utilizing such interpersonal skills as leadership, working with groups, family counseling.

i. Developing and implementing an organizational plan.

j. Recognizing and developing the strengths and positive characteristics of primary age children.

k. Identifying and utilizing teacher materials dealing with the affective domain.

Working with Teachers and Parents

Not surprisingly, the nature and success of the CDS program at any given site rest primarily on the abilities of the specialist. Regardless of background and training, the CDS must be effective in encouraging positive direction and purpose in the lives of those they serve.

In Morgan's words, "The CDS is a change agent working in the schools." The role of the child development specialists is best understood in terms of their relationship with each of the two major groups they interact with, teachers and parents.

One might assume that those individuals with experience as teachers would be in the best position to work with teachers, but this is not necessarily the case. Wilbur Jackson, coordinator of guidance and psychology for Salem School District 24J, asserts, "You can hire people who have been teachers, and that gives them an edge for about two weeks. If they don't begin to help people grow stronger, feel more confident, or feel like they are doing a better job, then whether they are a teacher or not, that teacher stuff isn't going to last very long."

An important distinction is made in CDS programs between those who help and those who rescue. Morgan declares, "If teachers have a problem, the CDS is a person who helps them solve their own problems, not solve it for them, not be rescuers. Rescuers make people feel weaker and cause resentment." It has been found that initial resistance to the CDS concept often exists on the part of teachers. They would often prefer to have someone who would relieve them of playground or classroom duties. Once teachers become more familiar with the CDS program, however, they become much more supportive of the CDS concept because it allows teachers more time for teaching. Classroom management problems are minimized, making their jobs much easier.

Even more critical to the success of a CDS program is the ability of the specialist to work with parents. "If we were allowed to work with any

one group, it would be the parents," declares Jackson. "Parents have children for eighteen years, whereas a counselor or teacher may have a child for a year or less." Unfortunately, the people who most readily participate in programs designed to improve parenting skills are those who are likely to be the most competent today. This is where the CDS is most crucial. They must make home visits to get reluctant parents involved. To be truly effective, a CDS must have access to parents in an organized, planned way.

The emphasis on parental involvement in the CDS program has two major benefits. Not only are parents helped to become more effective with their children, but also parents become more supportive of school programs. The credibility, appreciation, and respect that develops on the part of parents for schools as a result of the CDS parent programs is an important byproduct of the CDS program. Parental support has manifested itself in concrete ways. When budget cutbacks have threatened the CDS program, parents have actively sought to prevent its removal. Morgan recalls, "When Salem School District Superintendent William Kendrick recently surveyed the parents of the district on what programs the district could cut, twenty-one programs were listed. CDS came out the number two program to keep; transportation was number one. That was the parents that said that. Because they had been involved, they said, 'You're not taking our program'."

Salem: A Case Study

Despite the growing financial burdens felt by today's schools, the CDS program continues to thrive. Twelve districts continue to operate state-approved CDS programs in sixty-five elementary schools throughout the state.

The efforts of the Salem School District provide an excellent example of the manner in which the CDS concept can become an integral part of a districtwide approach to affective and developmental concerns. The program has expanded to include twenty-five school sites. The success of the CDS program is due to several factors, chief among which is the hard work and deep commitment of several individuals in the Salem district, including top level administrative support. Unlike many districts that pay lip service to the importance of positive self-image, and well developed interpersonal skills, the Salem district has made guidance an integral part of the elementary curriculum. Teachers are required to teach fifty minutes of guidance per week. The philosophy underlying the guidance curriculum, according to Salem Guidance and Psychology Coordinator Wilbur Jackson, is that guidance is a survival skill in our present day and age, as necessary as basic academic skills:

> The whole abilities to get along with others and understand self are crucial. We have institutions that take care of people who have not learned these skills--the penitentiaries, state hospitals, and medical hospitals.

Activities are selected by teachers from a twenty-two unit objective-oriented curriculum and implemented with the help and supervision of CDS personnel.

The Guidance Curriculum

The guidance curriculum is based on three broad goals:

1. The students will develop their personal selves to the fullest.
2. The students will exhibit effective interpersonal skills
3. The students will take responsibility for giving direction to their lives.

To accomplish these goals, the guidance curriculum has been divided into seven cluster areas, each containing one or more specific instructional objectives comprising the twenty-two curricular units. They include:

1. Decision-Making
   a. View self as capable
   b. Understand specific nature of concerns
   c. Be aware of alternatives and decision-making
2. Behavior Causes
   a. Know words that describe behavior
   b. Know alternative behavior
   c. Know consequences and time delay of behavior
   d. Predict personal risk
   e. Understand internal and external rewards
   f. Know the motivating force
3. Awareness of Feelings
   a. Verbally express feelings
   b. Express feelings nonverbally
   c. Know the causes and consequences of expressed feelings

4. Listening

   a. Listening--verbal and nonverbal

   b. Understand ideas and feelings of others

5. Conflict and Cooperation

   a. Understand own and others' needs

   b. Share, accept, and receive feedback

   c. Resolve conflict

6. Valuing

   a. Understand the meaning of values

   b. Prioritize values

   c. Be aware of alternatives and conflicting values

7. Occupation Needs

   a. Be aware of a variety of occupations

For each of the instructional units, the curriculum provides instructional methods, recommended activities, materials, and media, along with evaluation procedures. Based on a district-prepared assessment instrument, teachers select activities based on the demonstrated needs identified by the assessment results. Thus, they are able to provide those activities which more closely respond to the needs of students. A parallel curriculum has been developed for the CDS worker for use with teachers and parents.

Screening Process

When questioned about the factors he felt were responsible for Salem's success, Jackson emphasized the importance of the screening and selection process. The district employs extensive procedures in developing a pool

of potential CDS personnel from which individual schools draw new specialists

> When I screen applicants, people go through a one and one-half to two hour interview to assess their competencies. It's not just answering questions; we do a lot of role playing. I take the role of "Willie," a fourth grade boy. I present a problem; for example, "the kids don't like me," and check my insides about how it's going. I also look to how it's going with regard to how they take the role of a teacher. Again, how am I feeling? Am I feeling stronger or am I feeling weaker? I also assess their problem solving process. Did they rescue me? Or are they going to work with me as a consulting team? We also ask very open-ended questions about guidance curriculum and parent education....The screening process needs to be done by someone very conversant with the field of guidance.

Those individuals who successfully demonstrate competence in the areas assessed by the district guidance coordinator are then placed in a pool from which principals can select appropriate personnel.

Evidence of Success

Claude Morgan asserts that "the CDS program has been effective when you can honestly say that the school is a healthy place for teachers, parents, and children." Using that as a criterion, there is ample evidence that the CDS program is effective. Ron Schenk, a child development specialist at Rocky Heights Elementary School (Hermiston), reports that referrals for discipline problems to his office have dropped dramatically since the implementation of the CDS program seven years ago.

> Time after time I see children come into our school with serious behavior problems. The child is referred, a plan is made. The teacher follows the plan....She is supported by the principal, the specialists, the children's parents, and the child improves. Soon he begins to function effectively in the classroom. School becomes a positive experience, and he takes pride in his progress. He is now ready to accept more responsibility for his own behavior.

Success is impressively documented by the Portland School District in a longitudinal study of children receiving CDS services. The study was made to determine the program's impact on reducing school problems that have been linked to delinquent behavior. Students receiving CDS services were compared to students who attended CDS schools before the inception of the program. Data collected over a three-year period included measures of student behavior and characteristics--including background and demographic information--and test scores measuring self-concept and school adjustment. Thus far, CDS students "exhibit statistically significant gains in their degree of self-acceptance, social maturity, and self-security." The largest gains were recorded in the area of social maturity.

More important perhaps is the impact of the CDS program on the lives of specific children and their families. The day I arrived to interview

Wilbur Jackson at his office in Salem, he was opening a letter from a grateful parent:

> My children and I have participated in a group called "Children of Divorce" directed by Bonnie Fish and Larry Burquist at Four Corners School. We have benefitted from this experience and I think the leaders have done a fine job in helping us all. I appreciate the district supporting such vital programs and hope to see more in the future. Thank you very much.

Finally, this dramatic example shows how the CDS program is having a tangible effect on the lives of those it serves. This story recently appeared in the Salem Statesman Journal:

> Jerry's parents placed a hook on the wall so they could conveniently secure him for beatings. They would hoist Jerry on the hook and then lash him with coat hangers, rocks, or belts.
>
> "I don't think I'd be alive today if I hadn't run away," Jerry said. "My mother would have killed me or my step father...."
>
> Jerry ran away at age 15 full of hate and with a determination "to get kids of my own so I could raise them the right way." Jerry soon got his wish as he became a parent at 19. But like most children of abusive parents, instead of weaning himself from his parents' ways, he adopted them. Shortly after his child was born, Jerry took a new job which exhausted him. And after frustrating work days he began to slap his whining child. He once slapped her until she bled. In another beating he gave her her a black eye. It was not until a teacher told Jerry she had trouble teaching his frightened daughter that he realized that he had fallen prey to the adage--"like father like son"....
>
> "I realized that I was doing the same thing as my parents and I broke down and cried." Jerry attended parenting skills classes to cure himself of his own parents' habits and now he uses a soft voice instead of a threatening hand. "I don't think that I ever realized that my kids were human beings before; I was just like my own parents," Jerry said.

Salem's Liberty School child development specialist, Jody Crossler, described to me in a letter the process they employed in working with this case:

> This child was referred by her teacher to me. The teacher in her colorful language described her as "having the personality of a dead skunk." Her teacher, the father, and I worked closely together...causing startling changes.
>
> 1. The father began visiting the school in the afternoons.
> 2. He attended all STEP classes (13 evening sessions--Systematic Training in Effective Parenting).
> 3. The girl and another child met twice weekly:
>   a) once a week on motor skills weaknesses of the other child, the target child's strongest area;
>   b) once weekly on self-image (both girls needed this).
> 4. The father attended fall parent group the next year, featuring "Learning to Live," a film series for personal growth.
> 5. The child maintained a more positive acceptable personality, continued to come in for assistance to solve relationship problems on a voluntary basis.

Jody adds, "As you can see, change involves using all of the elements of our job--community, parents, staff, and child."

Getting Started

For school districts interested in initiating their own CDS programs, the Department of Education has compiled a helpful publication titled "Initiating Child Development Specialist Programs in Public Schools." Claude Morgan indicated that funds are currently available for the implementation of eight new projects. The state department stresses the importance of identifying groups and individuals who are willing to support the project. An interim coordinator should be assigned to orient the community to the project and involve community members on an advisory committee.

The support of upper-level administration is also considered crucial to the initial development of a CDS program. The state department recommends that the district superintendent be encouraged to discuss the concept informally with the school board and later formally introduce the project to the public through school board endorsement at a regular meeting. Their endorsement, along with expressions of interest and support, provide direction for the project and focus public attention on the CDS program.

The following steps are recommended:

Explain how the project meets all state requirements

Describe how community members can become involved

Estimate the number of parents, teachers, and students the project will serve

Define parent and community involvement to date (if any)

Highlight the potential benefits for all involved

Following board endorsement, a planning group should be appointed to conduct a formal survey of community support and to collect recommendations for the board's consideration. Early contact with the state department is encouraged.

Interviews

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